

# update

## Governor's Advisory Council on Aging



FALL 2003

### Home Health Agencies' Quality Data Now Available

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is releasing new, comparative quality data about home health agencies that operate in Arizona in late October. This information is being provided with the goal of further improving the quality of care provided by Medicare-certified home health agencies nationwide.

The consumer information resource includes 11 quality measures and demographic information about individual home health agencies. The quality measures include:

- four measures related to improvement in getting around (getting better at walking or moving around; getting in and out of bed; getting to and from the toilet; and having less pain when moving around)
- four measures related to meeting basic daily needs (getting better at dressing, bathing, and taking oral medicines correctly; staying the same and not getting worse at bathing)
- two measures related to medical emergencies (had to be admitted to the hospital and needed urgent, unplanned medical care)

- one measure related to improvement in mental health (being confused less often).

As part of the Home Health Quality Initiative (HHQI), Medicare's Quality Improvement Organizations (QIOs) are providing technical assistance to local home health agencies. The goals are to improve quality of care, and provide information to consumers to help them better use the quality performance data. The QIO for the state of Arizona is Health Services Advisory Group, Inc. ([www.hsag.com](http://www.hsag.com)).

To advertise this new resource, HHS is conducting a national media campaign. Consumers are encouraged to access "Home Health Compare" when selecting a home health agency. Additional information about the Home Health Quality Initiative in Arizona is available at <http://hhqi.hsag.com>.

The new data will expand and strengthen existing Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) beneficiary-oriented comparison tools—including "Medicare Health Plan Compare," "Dialysis Facility Compare," and "Nursing Home Compare."

The publicly reported data is available at "Home Health Compare" at the CMS consumer website, [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov). You may also call Medicare's help line, 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227).

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#### **Where's the Color?**

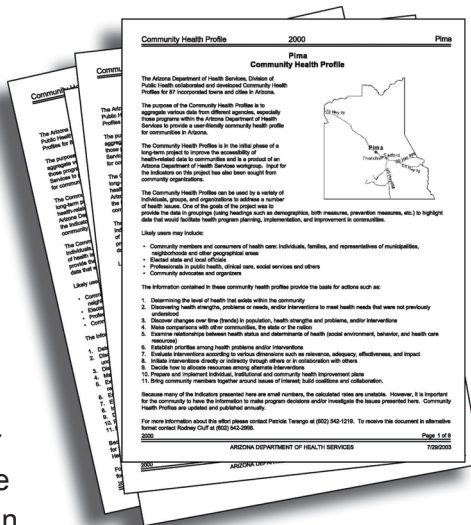
In light of the recent state budget crisis, the Governor's Council is trimming costs. Dropping the color ink for the newsletter saves a small amount, but every penny counts!

# Report Focuses on Health Status of AZ Communities

The Arizona Department of Health Services for the first time has produced individual reports on the health status of communities across the state.

The easy-to-use profiles of 87 incorporated communities and towns focus on access to care, leading causes of death, risk factors, accident rates, and other top measures. This data will allow communities to compare their status to areas with similar demographics, the state, and the nation. Health departments, elected officials, community groups and other interested parties can use these profiles to discover trends in

population, health strengths and problems; establish priorities for health concerns; evaluate interventions; and build coalitions around a particular health issue.



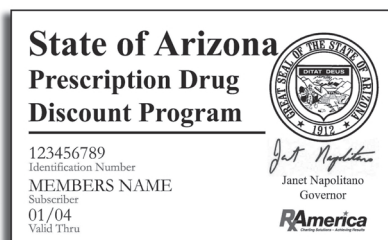
“These profiles give communities an opportunity to discover strengths, problems, and needs. We hope we are laying the groundwork for positive change,” said Arizona Department of Health Services Director Catherine Eden.

Visit the Arizona Department of Health Service’s web site, [www.hs.state.az.us](http://www.hs.state.az.us), for the reports, and more information and ideas for using them.

## Arizona’s Prescription Drug Discount Program

The Prescription Drug Discount Program is a plan created by Governor Janet Napolitano to provide significant discounts on prescription drugs for seniors and disabled Arizona residents covered by Medicare. The plan has already **saved more than \$400,000** for participating members.

Savings typically range from 10% to 55% off the regular retail price. the actual discount may be more or less, depending on the medication and the pharmacy used. Most members have saved an average of \$13.35 per prescription. The **average savings on generic drugs is 39%** and the average savings on **brand drugs is 17.5%.**



To apply:

1. Fill out an online enrollment form from the Rx America website ([www.rxamerica.com/az\\_discount\\_form.html](http://www.rxamerica.com/az_discount_form.html)), print out the form and mail it to RxAmerica with the \$9.95 enrollment fee.
2. Request enrollment materials from RxAmerica by calling **1-888-227-8315**. Enrollment information will be mailed to your home immediately.
3. Pickup enrollment materials locally through one of the participating pharmacies. For a list of pharmacies call Rx America at **1-888-227-8315**.

*The average savings on generic drugs is 39%, and on brand drugs it is 17.5%.*

**SAVE THE DATE!**

*The Governor’s Advisory Council on Aging is proud to announce the*  
**2004 Governor’s Conference on Aging**  
**May 11 - 13, 2004 • Mesa Arizona**

## Happenings Around the State

### Grandparents and Kinship Care

Programs to assist Grandparents Raising Grandchildren / Kinship Care continue to grow across the state. Four kinship care coalitions—Tucson, Yuma, Flagstaff, and Phoenix—have held half-day or full day educational events to provide valuable information and resources to caregivers. In addition, other local groups have held support groups and recognition events for kinship caregivers.

The Council continues to work with groups to establish support networks and resource centers across the state. The Council is presently looking to facilitate partnerships to explore starting one-stop resource centers in rural communities. For those interested in starting a kinship care support group, the *Support Group Training Manual* is available free from the Council. For a copy of the manual or information on

Grandparent and Kinship care resources in your area, contact the Council office at 602-542-4710.

### Older Workers Task Force (OWTF)

The OWTF will be publishing an E-mail newsletter containing helpful information on recruiting, hiring, and retaining older workers. Alternating issues will be tailored to meet the needs of employers and then employees on a continuing basis.

Businesses and individuals interested in being included on the E-mail mailing list can contact the Council office at 602-542-4710 or send an E-mail to [gaca@mail.de.state.az.us](mailto:gaca@mail.de.state.az.us). The OWTF is also seeking employer groups who would be interested in making presentations at future task force meetings on their hiring strategies and their workforce needs. The OWTF meets the third week of every month. Interested groups can contact the Council office for specific dates.

## Lupe Solis Honored with Caring Spirit Award

Lupe Solis, Associate State Director for Advocacy, AARP, received the Dr. R. Alice Drought Caring Spirit Award for Individual Achievement on Oct. 3, 2003. The award is given by the Area Agency on Aging, Region One, to recognize individuals who contribute their time to improving the lives of seniors living in Maricopa County.

Dr. Drought was the founding director of the Area Agency on Aging, Region One and served from 1974-1981.

"It is important to recognize Lupe Solis for her on-going commitment and efforts to improve the lives of older adults," said Barry Gold, Executive Director, Governor's Advisory Council on Aging. "Arizona is enriched by her compassion and work throughout her career."

Lupe worked at the Governor's Advisory Council on Aging for 23 years. In 2000, she accepted an associate director position with AARP.

For the past two decades, Lupe has helped shape programs and services that have had a positive impact on older Arizonans' lives. Grandparents raising grandchildren, victims of elder exploitation, persons

with Alzheimer's disease and their families, and older workers are just a few that benefited from her work. Under her leadership and support, Council committees and task forces succeeded in promoting policies and creating funding for needed services and support.

At AARP, Lupe Solis worked fervently with other agencies to save funding for non-medical home and community-based services (HCBS). With little lead-time, Lupe organized the "half-a-plate" legislative campaign to bring legislators' attention to the great need for these services. The strategy worked and funding was restored.

Lupe Solis embodies the belief held by many that "one person can make a difference." Through her commitment, hard work and sheer force of will, she has "made things happen" to greatly enhance the quality of life for older Arizonans.



*Lupe Solis has received the Dr. R. Alice Drought Caring Spirit Award for Individual Achievement.*

## Arizona's Minority Report

The Center on Aging, U of A, and the Aging and Adult Administration, DES has released, **Arizona's Older Ethnic Minorities 2000: A Demographic Analysis**. This 170-page report contains the most comprehensive look at Arizona's older ethnic minority population ever. Using narrative, tables, and maps, the report describes the diversity of the state by looking at population composition, living arrangements, household and family structure, employment, social conditions, income, health status and service utilization of today's older Arizonans. To order the report and/or CD contact the Arizona Center on Aging, U of A at 520-626-5800.

## New on the Council Website

The Governor's Council on Aging, with Area Agency on Aging, Region One and the William E. Morris Institute for Justice has compiled a summary of newly enacted laws on a variety of areas from the state budget to veteran's services. The **2003 Summary: Legislation Affecting Older Adults** can be found on the Council's web page at

**[www.de.state.az.us/gaca](http://www.de.state.az.us/gaca)**



## Governor's Advisory Council on Aging

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